



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

SEP - 4 2012

Jonathan D. McDade
Region Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Leo W. O'Brien Building
11A Clinton Avenue, Suite 719
Albany, New York 122007

Dear Mr. McDade:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project (CEQ# 20120256). This review was conducted in accordance with Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C 7609, PL 91-604 12 (a), 84 Stat. 1709), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

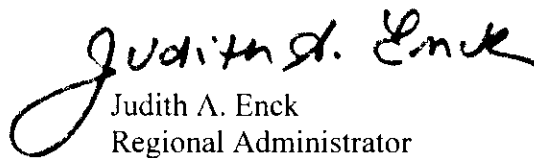
The purpose of the project is to maintain a vital link in the regional and national transportation network by providing a Hudson River crossing between Rockland and Westchester Counties, New York that addresses the limitations and shortcomings of the existing Governor Malcolm Wilson Tappan Zee Bridge. The preferred alternative is the Replacement Bridge alternative. The FEIS discusses two options for the crossing substructure (the short and long span options) and two possible superstructures (cable stay and arch) for the replacement bridge. These options have only minor variations in their impacts to the environment and are meant to provide an envelope for the possible final design of the Replacement Bridge Alternative to be determined under a Design-Build process.

In general, the FEIS responds adequately to EPA's March 22, 2012 comments on the Draft EIS and we commend FHWA and the project sponsors for continuing to minimize impacts to the community and environment. As you move forward on the Design-Build process, we recommend that FHWA continue to work closely with EPA and other resource agencies on ensuring that impacts are minimized, and to consult on whether any supplemental NEPA analysis would be required should the final design represent a significant change from the parameters of design and construction outlined in the FEIS.

We also recognize that including a mass transit system across the bridge is not under consideration at this time, and that a new Regional Transit Task Force will be created to study costs and options for regional transit, including commuter rail and a bus rapid transit system on the bridge and key portions of the Westchester-Rockland corridor. EPA views the framework and mission of the Task Force as presented in the enclosed Rockland County Press Release as a positive environmental development. The potential for the addition of mass transit underscores the importance of structural features capable of supporting various transit options as described in the FEIS. We look forward to participating in this new planning effort.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the FEIS. If you have any questions, please call Lingard Knutson, Principal Project Reviewer at (212) 637-3747.

Sincerely,

 Judith A. Enck
Regional Administrator

Enclosure